

IG Survey -- 1960

(p 71 para f.)

We accordingly believe that intervention at the highest Agency level is required in order to secure effective handling of the problem of ensuring that Agency language competence will attain the proper levels required both by current needs and by probable future developments. There appears to be urgent need to make Agency policy statements more specific and more effective.

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Introduction

STATINTL

Language Development Program, assigns responsibility to the Deputy Directors to establish language requirements and to assure the continuing attainment and retention of language proficiency. Heads of Career Services and Operating Officials are to direct or encourage their employees to engage in language study and the DTR is to exercise general direction of the Program -- provide for directed and voluntary training, establish standards and proficiency tests, and administer monetary achievement and maintenance awards. The regulation further provides that a five-man committee for language development consisting of one representative each of the three Deputy Directors, and of the Offices of Training and Personnel shall recommend and periodically review policies, procedures and other matters affecting the program, including language awards.

Evaluation

Given the Agency's foreign intelligence mission, its size and the amount of annual attrition, the figures quoted earlier raise doubt whether the Agency is fully discharging its responsibilities in the matter of developing and maintaining its language capabilities. A number of cases of failure to provide necessary language capability in the field have been observed. Thus, in the course of our survey of NE Div. at the end of 1959, a serious deficiency in language competence and only very superficial area knowledge was found at practically all posts in that area. At a number of posts in Arab-speaking lands, the station had not a single staff employee who spoke Arabic. In general, these conditions also had been found to exist in that area at the time of our 1957 Survey; thus no real improvement was noted in the course of three years. It should be stated, however, that in the fall of 1959 the DD/P learned of this situation and ordered that a suitable number of employees be sent at once to training in Arabic. It is significant that it required a high-level direction to achieve this improvement.

... It should be mentioned that in Feb and Apr 1960, the DD/I and the DD/S, respectively, concluded the preparation of detailed Surveys of the language requirements of the positions under their jurisdictions and that a survey of training requirements, including language training, is presently being conducted by three divisions of the DD/P area. The information being produced in the DD/P effort appears, however, to be related to the needs and desires of the individual employee rather than to the requirements of the position.

... There appears to be very little high-level advanced planning concerning language requirements, e.g., provision of competence in Chinese in anticipation of the increased Agency requirements that would result from a recognition of Communist China by the U.S.; likewise in connection with possible political developments in Africa beyond the immediate future. *FY 71 completing 4 FT } Chinese
FY 72 planned 2 FT*

... With reference to Russian language, a special attitude has resulted from the peculiar position of SR Div. which stations its personnel abroad in non-Bloc countries. These officers acquire the host country language in order to operate and they profess to find it sufficient even in dealing with Soviet nationals found there, since the latter are always trained in the local language. This attitude has resulted in SR Div attributing minor importance to learning Russian, as is evidenced by the fact that in 1959 only two Agency employees were taking full-time Russian.

Russian FY 71 - 4 completed FT -- FY 72 planned 9 FT